MAY

Meat for the Planet

SUSTAINABLE DISH

Diana Rodgers, RD

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This month's guide will cover common misconceptions about the sustainability of animal foods and highlight some of the environmental benefits provided by animal agriculture. We will discuss the most sustainable and nutrient-dense type of meat and a new program to send regenerative meat to school lunch programs!

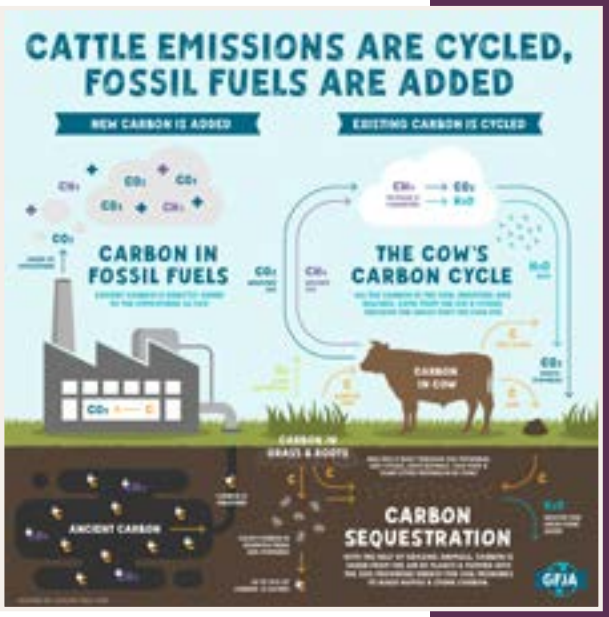
I know a lot of people make New Year's Resolutions to change their diet, and it doesn't always stick. Well, summer is just around the corner and that means backyard bbq's and quite likely food temptations that might derail you from maintaining an ideal diet. Use my coupon **Spring24 for 60% off** my course, Sustainavore, to get in great shape BEFORE the summer comes, so you head into the season with the right mindset and health. It only takes 30 days to look and feel so much better by learning how to choose the right food for your body. My course teaches you how to calculate the right amount of protein, plus helps you navigate other food choices. It will also teach you why animal sourced foods, like meat, are great for you and the environment. This coupon is only valid till May 15th, so take advantage now if this great chance to save and learn how to look and feel amazing! www.sustainavore.com

EAT MEAT FOR THE PLANET

There is so much misleading information out there when it comes to the impact that eating meat has on the planet. I constantly get asked about this, so this month let's debunk some myths about the sustainability of animal products and talk about some environmental ***benefits*** of animal agriculture.

"Aren't methane emissions from cattle causing climate change?"

- The methane emitted from cattle are part of the natural, or "biogenic" carbon cycle, whereas fossil fuels are extracted from "ancient" carbon and last thousands of years.
  Cattle transform existing carbon, in the form of grass and other fibrous materials, into methane as part of their digestive process. So while cows do burp methane, after about 10 years, it is broken back down into water and carbon dioxide molecules which are returned to the cycle to grow more grass.



- When cows are managed properly they can actually help sequester carbon in the soil.

"Meat production takes up too much water."

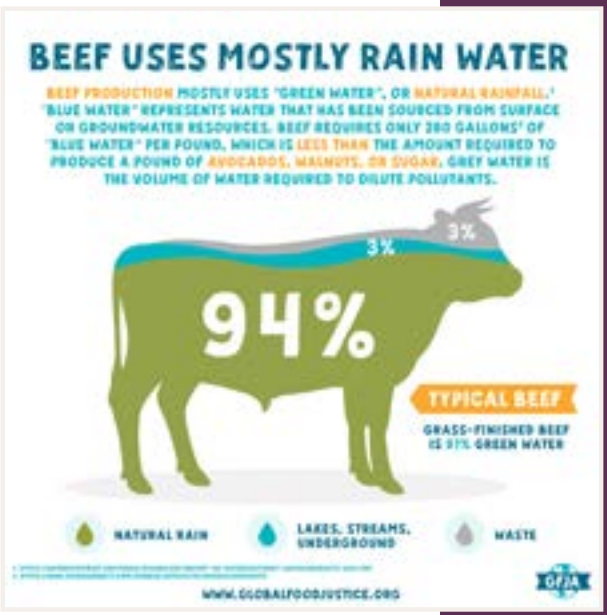
- People who claim that producing cattle requires too much water fail to distinguish between the types of water. For typical cattle production, 92% of the water attributed to beef is "green" water, meaning the moisture in their food, or rain that would have fallen even if the cattle weren't on the land. This number is even higher for grass-fed and

finished beef. Green water does not compete with drinking water, so cutting out your burger will not necessarily save drinkable water.

- Properly managed ruminants improve water cycles by enhancing soil's ability to retain water.
- Ruminant animals are not a closed system. About 30% of what cattle consume is returned directly to the ecosystem through urine and manure, adding beneficial nutrients and microbes.

"Can't we just eat the crops that we use to feed cattle?"

- The argument that it takes too much feed to produce animal protein and that we should instead simply feed humans what we are feeding livestock fails to account for the nutritional differences between plants and meat.
- 86% of global livestock feed consists of things that humans cannot digest, like grass, crop residue, and byproducts.
- It is estimated that it takes 2.5lbs of corn per 1lb of steak. Would you rather eat 2.5lbs of corn or 1lb of steak? Beef is the clear winner from a nutrient standpoint. Not all calories are created nutritionally equal.



- Monoculture systems of intensive corn and soybean production have caused a number of environmental challenges, such as a decline in soil health due to increased runoff and lack of soil organic matter and depletion of important soil nutrients over time.

How drinking water can actually dehydrate you

Healthy hydration isn't just about drinking water. It's about water AND electrolytes. Both need to be replaced to prevent muscle cramps, headaches, and energy dips. But most people only replace the water. Drinking beyond thirst is a bad idea because it dilutes blood electrolyte levels. The solution isn't to stop drinking water, though. It's to drink water plus electrolytes. Enter LMNT. LMNT has your electrolyte needs covered. It contains enough electrolytes to move the needle towards each of these electrolyte goals. You're also guaranteed to find an LMNT flavor you love.

Click here to get a free sample pack with your order!

Get the full guide to defending meat, "Meat Quick Facts", with science-backed responses to the 9 most common misunderstandings about meat - from ethics to the environment to nutrition. This is a great resource to have and I encourage you to share it with friends and family members that have questions about meat.

ANIMAL AGRICULTURE AND SOIL HEALTH

Well-managed livestock have immense environmental benefits. You might not think about it often, but soil is key to our everyday life.

We need soil to produce nutritious food, filter water, and mitigate climate change. And not just any soil. We need healthy, living soil with a diversity of microorganisms, minerals, and organic matter. Around the world, intensive crop production has exploited and depleted soil, compromising its nutrients, fertility, and biodiversity. The loss of fertile soil will have disastrous impacts globally. Not only will we not be able to produce nutritious foods, but we will not have arable topsoil to even feed the growing population.

- **Soils are crucial to food security and nutrition**. An estimated 95% of our food is directly or indirectly produced on soil. As the health of soil degrades, so do the nutrients in our food. Intensive agriculture has stripped nutrients.

- **Soil plays an important role in mitigating climate change by absorbing carbon**. Grasslands can naturally sequester carbon from the atmosphere through photosynthesis, effectively reducing harmful greenhouse gasses. Grasslands and rangelands are actually more effective carbon sinks than forests because they are impacted less by droughts and wildfires.

- **Soil is also a key actor in healthy water systems**, which is of significant importance in regions that are susceptible to drought conditions. Healthy soil is like a sponge, it can hold more water, improving resilience in dry years. The ability to retain more water also improves water quality by reducing runoff from cropland.

Healthy soil is critical to our future. And healthy soil requires supporting natural ecosystems, which include ruminant animals, rather than processed meat alternatives that rely on extractive crops like corn and soy.

Thankfully, there are ways to improve soil health. Farmers around the world incorporate agricultural practices that focus on rebuilding soil organic matter and restoring biodiversity. One of the most important of these practices, commonly known as regenerative grazing, is a method of managing livestock on a piece of land for a controlled period of time and then rotating them to new pasture, allowing the grazed land to rest and recover.

Properly raised ruminant animals can have significant impacts on sequestering carbon, improving water cycles, and producing nutrient rich foods. They can also help increase biodiversity, both above and below ground—the more life underground, the healthier and more fertile the soil.

The many environmental benefits of livestock production - such as upcycling nutrients, making use of non-arable land (land we can't efficiently crop), improving soil health, and providing manure for crop systems - are often overlooked or dismissed.

THE BEST MEAT YOU CAN EAT

If you're looking for some of the most nutritious and sustainable meat to eat, you should be eating wild game. Wild game are typically more active than domesticated animals, and eat their natural, highly varied diets, making it the most nutritious, sustainable, and ethical meat to eat.

One of my favorite sources of nutritious and sustainable meats is venison from Maui Nui. Maui Nui harvests invasive Axis deer in Maui to provide high quality venison while also managing the population size to mitigate damage to the environment.

Let's talk about the benefits of Maui Nui venison:

- **Nutrient-Density**: Maui Nui venison grazes on rich volcanic soils eating a remarkable plant diversity. Their venison also has the highest protein percentage per calorie - with 21 grams of protein in only 107 calories.

  Compared to beef, their venison has:

  - 2–4x more antioxidants
  - 8–64x more healthy fats
  - 22% more protein
  - And proof that stress-free harvesting is better for you!

- **Sustainability**: Maui Nui's mission to harvest Axis deer not only provides high quality food, it also serves as an important management tool to lessen the negative impact that invasive species have on the ecosystem.

  Balance is key to a healthy ecosystem. The most pervasive threats to Hawaiian species are non-native and invasive plants and animals. Hawaiian plants are not adapted to ungulate browsing and trampling. Invasive feral deer, pigs, goats, sheep, and cattle are responsible for widespread destruction of lowland ecosystems and continue to degrade remaining native ecosystems, including critical forested watershed that are vital to Hawai'i's water and soil resources. By harvesting the non-native Axis deer and managing the population size, Maui Nui is solving a significant environmental problem.

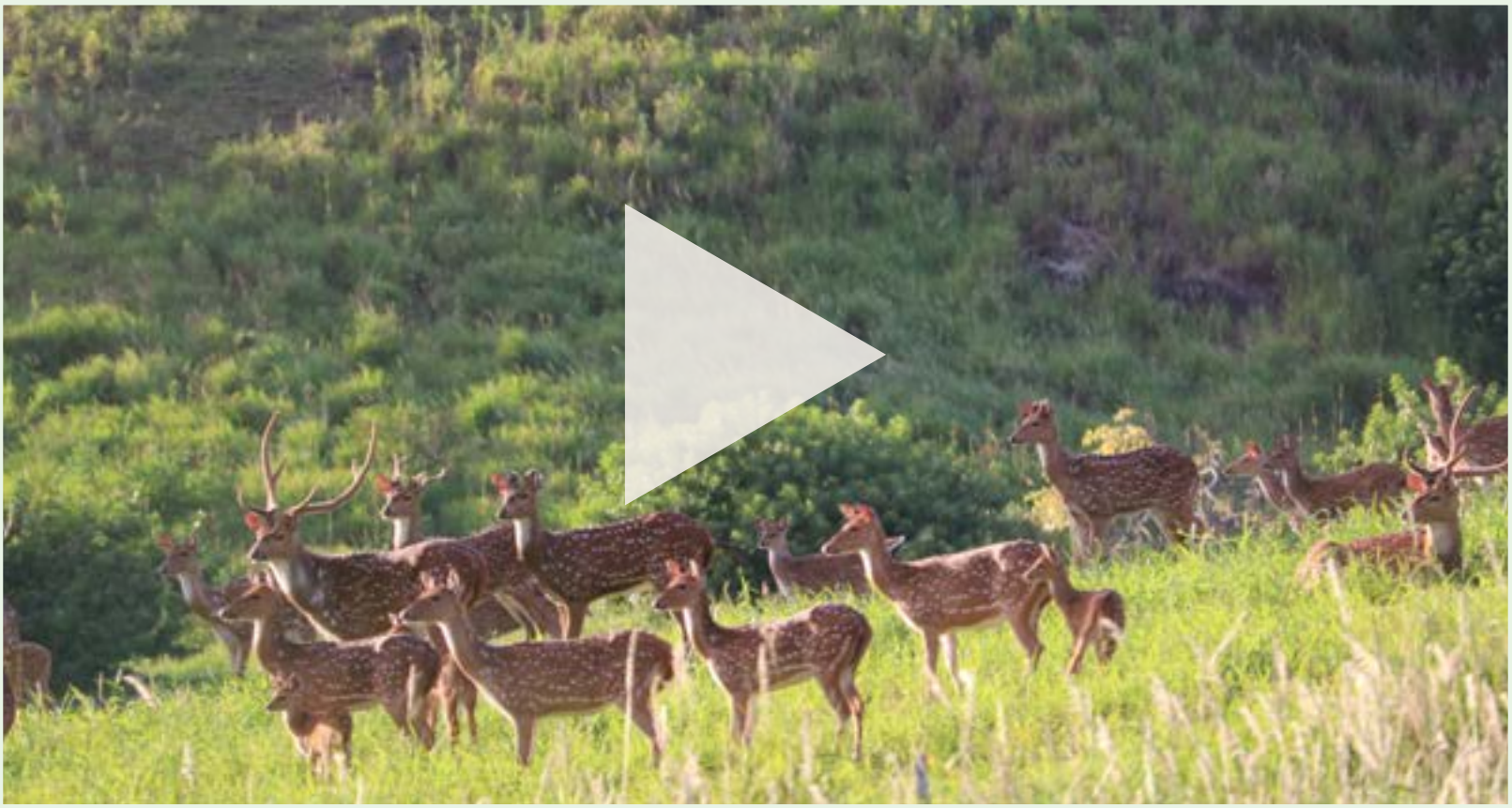
- **Ethics**: The wild deer live a happy life and Maui Nui focuses on a stress-free harvesting process.

  As a non-native species without natural predators or seasonal swings, Hawai'i's Axis deer experience minimal stress throughout their lives and all harvesting is done entirely at night to make the process low-stress for the deer. They are never baited, fenced, penned, or corralled and remain wild until the moment of harvest.

  Did you know you can actually taste the difference from a stress-free process? When animals are stressed during or immediately before harvest, they rapidly deplete their bodies' sugar stores and, in turn, their lactic acid levels, causing serious adverse effects on meat quality—both texture and flavor. Lactic acid also acts as an anti-microbial and higher levels equate to less bacteria growth and safer meat.

Maui Nui has tons of amazing venison products. One of my favorites is the venison jerky sticks! They are the best nutrient-rich snack to pack on the go—so much better than an ultra processed protein bar. Try them out here.

Click below to learn more about how Maui Nui Venison seeks to manage Hawai'i's invasive Axis deer populations while supporting local needs for valuable food sources.



It's not just about getting "enough" fiber—

It's about getting the right types. Not all fiber is created equal, and research has found that 95% of us are not getting enough of the right kind of fiber. Countless studies show many health conditions are linked to a low fiber diet including constipation, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), appetite irregularity, weight gain, out-of-control blood sugar, and unhealthy cholesterol. It's vital to be sure you're using a fiber supplement that contains the right type of fiber.

Learn More About Baobab

BRINGING REGENERATIVE MEAT TO SCHOOL LUNCHES

I have always been a huge advocate for children's health. Kids need the nutrients from animal foods like meat, eggs, and dairy for proper growth and development. Nine million children in the United States are food insecure and it is estimated that over half of preschool-aged children have micronutrient deficiencies. I am really excited to be partnering with White Oak Pastures on a meat to school program in Atlanta. We are sending 2,300 pounds of grass-fed, regeneratively raised beef to the school to provide the kids with nourishing meals.

White Oak Pastures is a multi-generation family farm producing grass-fed beef, lamb, and goat and pasture-raised pork, poultry, and rabbit. Not only do they practice regenerative agriculture, but they also follow a zero-waste model - they sell the meats and poultry that they butcher on the farm, the cattle hides are dried for pet chew rawhides or tanned and crafted into leather goods, the fat from the cattle is rendered down to create tallow products, and the inedible viscera is composted to be spread on the farm as rich organic matter to fertilize the soil. Their regenerative, zero-waste model is not only producing the highest quality food and supporting healthy soil, it's also revitalizing the rural community in Bluffton, Georgia—it's a great demonstration of the various benefits of animal agriculture.

If you're looking for a trustworthy source for high quality, sustainable meat I highly recommend White Oak Pastures. You can also support our Meat-to-School Program by donating here.

COLOSTRUM: OVERHYPED OR LEGIT?

Colostrum has been super trendy lately so I wanted to explain exactly what it is, what it can be helpful for, and how to source it well.

Many of you probably know by now that gut health is key to every aspect of your health. Our gut impacts our immune function, skin health, mental health, and so much more.

Colostrum is the nutrient-rich fluid female mammals produce in the first few days after giving birth. It serves as the first source of nourishment for newborns and is packed with essential nutrients, antibodies, growth factors, and other bioactive compounds. Colostrum nourishes the gut microbiome, supports the mucosal barriers (e.g., gut, skin, lungs, etc.), protects against infections, and modulates the immune response. This is incredibly helpful for people who struggle with 'leaky gut', want to support their gut microbiome, or want to reduce immune hypersensitivity and over-reactivity.

So, yes - colostrum is a really powerful supplement when it comes to gut health and immune function, but quality sourcing is important. I like this colostrum because it is sourced from grass-fed, pasture-raised farms across the US, and it's free from pesticides, heavy metals, antibiotics, and hormones.

RegenMarket is a collective of Montana Ranches that raise Bison, Beef, Pork, Lamb, and Chicken. Our producers use regenerative practices to help support the health of our planet and your body. Our markets goal is to stand up to the corporations of the industrial food system by offering memberships that directly support these multi-generational ranches and improve consumer access to nutrient dense food!

Shop RegenMarket without a membership and receive 1 lb of grass-fed grass -finished organic beef free! Anyone who signs up for our email list will also receive 20% off their order!

SUSTAINABLE DISH

DIANA RODGERS, RD

Diana Rodgers, RD, is a "real food" nutritionist and sustainability advocate near Boston, Massachusetts. She's an author of three books, runs a clinical nutrition practice, hosts the Sustainable Dish Podcast, and has served as an advisory board of numerous nutrition and agriculture organizations including Whole30, Animal Welfare Approved and Savory Institute. She speaks internationally about the intersection of optimal human nutrition and regenerative agriculture.

Diana is co-author of, Sacred Cow: The Case for (Better) Meat and the director, producer of the companion film, Sacred Cow. Her new initiative, the Global Food Justice Alliance, advocates for a nutritious, sustainable and equitable worldwide food system.

▸ Learn more at www.globalfoodjustice.org